

Executive Summary

The goal of the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS) is to conserve the wildlife biodiversity of Massachusetts. The CWCS must address eight required elements described by the U. S. Congress and must be approved by the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for this agency to receive funds through the State Wildlife Grant Program. These eight elements, and a brief description of how the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MDFW) has addressed each, are included at the end of this executive summary.

In the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy, we describe a brief history of the MDFW and its past successful efforts to conserve the biodiversity of the Commonwealth. A review of the landscape changes which have affected wildlife populations sets the stage for problems we see facing these species today. We note the process used to identify the habitats and species in the greatest need of conservation. We list the primary strategies we plan to employ to conserve these species and their habitats, and we end by explaining the processes used to gain input to the CWCS from outside the MDFW and how the CWCS will be reviewed periodically.

We organized the CWCS around 22 habitat types ranging from large-scale habitats such as Large Unfragmented Landscape Mosaics; to medium-scale habitats like the state's Large- and Mid-sized Rivers; to small-scale habitats such as Vernal Pools. Information for each habitat type includes a description of the habitat; the suite of species in greatest need of conservation which is associated with that habitat; a map showing the distribution of the habitat type across the state, where available; a description of the problems and threats facing the habitat and the species in it; a listing of the conservation strategies needed to conserve the habitat; and the monitoring requirements that will ensure the success of the conservation strategies.

We identified 257 animal Species in Greatest Need of Conservation for the CWCS. These 257 species are assigned to one or more of the 22 habitats, if the habitat was essential to the survival of the species. Our list of Species in Greatest Need of Conservation includes all of the federally listed animal species in the state; all of our state Special Concern, Threatened, and Endangered animal species; globally rare species; animal species which are listed as being of regional concern by the Northeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies; and other species which are of conservation concern within the Commonwealth. A species summary is provided for each of the Species in Greatest Need of Conservation. This summary includes our most recent distribution information in map form, where this information is available, along with a life history narrative and a listing of key threats facing the species.

The strategies identified in the CWCS to ensure the conservation of populations of Species in Greatest Need of Conservation fall into six broad categories: habitat protection, surveys and inventories of the CWCS species and habitats, conservation planning, environmental regulation, habitat restoration and management, and education. We expect to accomplish these through coordination and partnerships with many governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations.